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CINCPAC AND CINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

KARACHI FOR RSE

E.O. 12065: DOW 6/4/85 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M
TAGS: ASEC, PEPR, PGOV, PINS, PINT, SHUM, AF, PX, UR, IR
SUBJ: (LOU) CURRENT STATUS OF THE INSURRECTION IN AFGHANISTAN

2. (LOW) NOTE: IN THE JUDGMENT OF THIS EMBASSY, THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE USED TO BRIEF MEMBERS OF THE
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KEPT AT CONFIDENTIAL, HOWEVER, SHOULD SOME WASHINGTON AGENCY PREFER THAT CERTAIN MATERIAL BE WITHHELD AT THIS TIME. END OF NOTE.

2. (LOU) SUMMARY: AS OF THE BEGINNING OF JUNE, THE KHALOJ REGIME CONTINUES TO BE BESET BY WIDESPREAD -- AND OFTE PRESSING -- INSURRECTIONS IN MOST OF THE AFGHAN PROVINCES, BUT REMAINS ABLE TO MEET MAJOR CHALLENGES QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY, AND TO CONTROL THE MAIN URBAN CENTERS OF THE COUNTRY. UNLESS THE REBELS CAN BECOME BETTER ORGANIZED AND COORDINATED -- AND RECEIVE MORE SIGNIFICANT OUTSIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT, THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO UNSEAT THE KHALOJ LEADERSHIP AT KABUL. THE LATTER APPEAR ABLE TO HOLD OUTLONG AS THEY CAN CONTINUE TO RELY UPON FIRM PARTY DISCIPLINE, SOVIET MATERIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT, AND THE LOYALTY OF KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES. END OF SUMMARY.

3. (LOU) THE SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES: AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN (DRA) PROBABLY RULES LESS THAN ONE-HALF OF THIS COUNTRY. THE HINTERLAND OF ENTIRE PROVINCES IN THE CENTRAL, EASTERN, AND WESTERN PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN HAVE SLID UNDER REBEL CONTROL, WITH THE DRA LEFT WITH ONLY CERTAIN PROVINCIAL CENTERS AND INTERMITTENT CONTROL OF THE BETTER ROADS IN THOSE REGIONS. THE PROVINCES THUS AFFECTED WOULD NOW INCLUDE: BAMIYAN, GHOR, URUZGAN, LAGHMAN, KONAR, PAKTIA, NIMROZ, FARAH, HERAT, BADGHIS, FARYAB, AND JAUZJAN (A FACT SHRILLY DENIED BY THE KHALOJ PROPOGANDA MEDIA). THEY ARE CHARACTERIZED, IN MOST PART, BY MOUNTAINOUS OR DESERT TERRAIN, AND BY SPARSE POPULATIONS. THE SITUATION IS ALSO SERIOUS, FROM THE DRA VIEWPOINT, IN OTHER PROVINCES, SUCH AS BALKH, BADAKHSHAN, BAGHLAN, NANGARHAR, LOGAR, WARDAK, GHAZNI, ZABUL, KANDAHAR, AND HELMAND, BUT THE GOVERNMENT
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MENT HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN A BROADER CONTROL OVER THESE MORE POPULOUS, RICHER AGRICULTURAL REGIONS. SINCE THE HERAT UPRISING IN MARCH, THE JALALABAD TROOP MUTINY IN APRIL, AND THE SHORT-LIVED REBEL CONQUEST OF PUL-I-KHUMRI IN MAY, THE REGIME HAS NOT HAD TO CONTENT WITH ANY MORE SERIOUS CHALLENGES IN THE MAJOR URBAN AREAS.

4. (LOU) THE SITUATION ALONG THE ROADS: KHALOJ CONTROL OVER THE MAIN PAVED ROADS OF THE COUNTRY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CHALLENGED. REBEL FORCES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEIZE SHORT

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SECTIONS OF HIGHWAY AND HOLD THEM FOR THREE-TO-FIVE HOURS, EXERCISING SELECTIVE CONTROL OVER TRAFFIC. THIS HAS BEEN HAPPENING ALL OVER AFGHANISTAN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FOLLOWING VERRIFIED EVENTS INVOLVING POSSIBLE DANGER FOR TRAVELLERS HAVE OED DURING RECENT DAYS ALONG THE IMPORTANT ROUTE BETWEEN KANDAHAR AND KABUL: (A) ON MAY 25, A CIVILIAN BUS WAS STOPPED BY REBELS, WHO BOARDED THE VEHICLE, REMOVED TWO UNIFORMED KHALOJ OFFICERS AND ONE CIVILIAN WITH A ZAPATA-TYPE KHALOJ MUSTACHE, APOLOGIZED TO THE OTHER PASSENGERS FOR THE DELAY, AND PERMITTED THE BUS TO CONTINUE ALONG ITS WAY; (B) ON MAY 30, A UN VEHICLE WAS COMMANDEERED BY WHAT APPEARED TO BE KHALOJ MILITIA, TAKEN TO A NEARBY MOUNTAIN VILLAGE WHERE TWO SLAUGHTERED KHALOJ SCHOOL TEACHERS WERE PLACED ABOARD, AND WAS RELEASED AFTER THE CORPSES WERE DUMPED BY THE HIGHWAY; (C) ALSO ON MAY 30, A PRIVATE AFGHAN CAR, TRAVELLING FROM KANDAHAR TO KABUL, WAS SHOT AT FROM A NEARBY HILL AND RECEIVED THREE BULLET HOLES IN THE ROOF; AND

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(C) [REDACTED] NOTED THAT THE
GOVERNMENT'S HIGHWAY TOLL STATION NORTH OF GHAZNI WAS DESERTED
(THERE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN SOME "TROUBLE" BECAUSE HE SAW
MILITARY CAPS LITTERING THE FLOOR). ALTHOUGH IN MOST CASES,
REBEL ROADBLOCK PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN COURTEOUS AND SELECTIVE,
APPARENTLY LOOKING EXCLUSIVELY FOR KHALQIS AND RUSSIANS,
THE SHOOTING INCIDENT MENTIONED ABOVE INDICATES THAT
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INNOCENT TRAVELLERS FACE INCREASING RISKS OF BECOMING CAUGHT
UP IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A BUDDING CIVIL WAR. ADDITIONALLY,

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WE MIGHT SOON SEE TRADITIONAL AFGHAN BANDITRY RETURN TO THE ROADS AS THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO CONTROL THESE ROUTES WANES.

5. (LOW) THE SITUATION IN KABUL: DIPLOMATS, WHO ARE LIMITED BY GOVERNMENT EDICT TO THE IMMEDIATE KABUL REGION, LIVE IN AN OASIS OF RELATIVE CALM. HOWEVER, THEY ARE REMINDED OF THE FACT THAT THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY INSURRECTION ACTIVITY AS JETS AND HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS DEPART OVER THE CITY EVERY MORNING, LIKE COMMUTERS, TO SOME DOMESTIC TARGET. THE LARGE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT HERE APPEARS OMNIPRESENT, SUITABLY ALERT, BUT ALSO RATHER RELAXED. KHALQI OFFICIALS MAKE A POINT OF PUTTING ON A "WHAT, ME WORRIED?" ACT WHEN TALKING TO WESTERN OFFICIALS AND NEWSMEN. HOWEVER, WHEN SOME FAIRLY SERIOUS FIGHTING DID BREAK OUT VERY NEAR KABUL AIRPORT ABOUT A MONTH AGO, THE JITTERS OF THE LOCAL KHALQIS WERE OBVIOUS. (ON SUCH OCCASIONS, THE LESS HEROIC KHALQIS ARE SAID TO SHAVE OFF THE ZAPATA MUSTACHES -- WHICH IS A USELESS GESTURE IN VIEW OF THE RUMORS THAT EVERY BLOCK OF KABUL NOW HARBORS WELL-ARMED REBELS WHOSE FIRST DUTY ON THE DAY OF UPRISING WILL BE TO SLAUGHTER THE KHALQI NEIGHBORS ON HIS LIST.) THERE IS OCCASIONALLY SOME VIOLENCE INSIDE KABUL. EXPLOSIONS AND GUNFIRE ARE HEARD FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT THE NIGHTTIME OR MORNING HOURS. SOMETIMES THE VIOLENCE APPEARS IN THE STREETS. FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE MORNING OF MAY 29, A MILITARY OFFICER RESISTED ARREST IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT OF THE KART-I-PARWAN BOROUGH OF KABUL. HE SEIZED A SUBMACHINE GUN FROM ONE OF HIS KHALQI CAPTORS AND KILLED AT LEAST TWO OF THEM. IN AN ENSUING GUNFIGHT, THE OFFICER WAS ALSO KILLED. AT LEAST ONE INNOCENT BYSTANDER WAS SUBSEQUENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH

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GUNSHOT WOUNDS.

6. (LOW) WHO ARE THE REBELS? KNOWN BY MANY NAMES -- SUCH AS, MUJAHIDDIN ("HOLY WARRIORS"), THE IKHWAN-I-MUSLIMIN ("MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD"), THE NATIONAL FRONT (FOR THE LIBERATION OF AFGHANISTAN), OR THE MASS ORGANIZED PARTISAN UNITS, THE REBELS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE CURRENT INSURRECTION ARE OF MANY TYPES, WITH VARYING GOALS, SUCH AS: ETHNIC MINORITIES, LIKE THE HAZARAS, WHO, INTER ALIA, ARE REACTING TO THE "CULTURAL IMPERIALISM" REPRESENTED BY THE INCREASING PUSHKUNIZATION OF THE KHALQI LEADERSHIP; RURAL FORCES, WHO RESENT LAND REFORM;

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TRADITIONALISTS, WHO ARE OPPOSED TO THE KHALOIS' RADICAL SOCIALURES, SUCH AS THOSE WHICH ASSAULT ANCIENT MARRIAGE CODES! OR PUSHTUN TRIBES STRADDLING THE DURAND LINE FRONTIER WITH PAKISTAN WHO DESIRE LOOT (NEW SOVIET AK-47S, FOR EXAMPLE, FETCH A HIGH PRICE IN THE TRIBAL BAZAARS). EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE YET TO MEET AN AFGHAN CITIZEN WHO BELIEVES THE KHALOI CHARGES THAT IRANIAN AND PAKISTANI SOLDIERS "IN AFGHAN COSTUME" ARE FIGHTING GOVERNMENT FORCES. MANY OF THESE REBELS SEEM TO SHARE SOME CONVICTIONS IN COMMON, SUCH AS UNIVERSALLY HELD PERCEPTION THAT THEY ARE DEFENDING ISLAM AND THE KHALOIS ARE GODLESS INFIDELS WHO HAVE SOLD OUT AFGHANISTAN TO RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM. THE FIRST PART OF THAT NEGATIVE IMAGE • HAS RECENTLY STIMULATED THE KHALOIS INTO EXTENSIVE RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA ACTIVITY, SUCH AS HAVING POLITICALLY TAME MULLAHS CIT. KORANIC JUSTIFICATIONS FOR VARIOUS KHALOI MEASURES, SUCH AS THE ENDING OF USURY WITH DECREE NO. 6, AND STRESS THE VALUES OF "ISLAMIC SOCIALISM." ONE OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC GOVERNMENT MULLAH FROM LAGHMAN RECENTLY GOT CARRIED AWAY AND PROCLAIMED OVER KABUL RADIO THAT PRESIDENT TARAKI IS "THE GREATEST LEADER OF ISLAM IN THE LAST 1,400 YEARS!" (WHICH WOULD, OF COURSE, EXCLUDE MOHAMMAD HIMSELF). THE KHALOIS ADDRESS THE "RPO-RUSSIAN" IMAGE PROBLEM MORE OBLIQUELY, STRESSING THE NEED FOR SOVIET-AFGHAN FRIENDSHIP, AND THE GENEROSITY OF "OUR GREAT NORTHERN NEIGHBOR."

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7. (LOU) THE KHALQIS, INCIDENTALLY, USUALLY CALL THE REBELS
THE "IKHWAN-I-SHAYATIN" ("BROTHERHOOD OF SATAN"), AN ARTFUL
PLAY ON THE NAME OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD. THE LATTER'S
MOVEMENT IS SAID BY THE KHALQIS TO BE DIRECTED BY "MUSLIM-
LOOKING FOREIGNERS" (A REFERENCE TO THE ALLEGED ANTI-AMANULLAH
ACTIVITIES OF LAWRENCE OF ARABIA INSIDE AFGHANISTAN IN THE
1920S) AND BY "MADE-IN-LONDON" (LAWRENCE AGAIN) OR "MADE-IN-
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PARIS (AYATOLLAH KHOMEINE) "MULLAHS." AMONG OTHERS IN THE
PANTHEON OF EVIL FORCES BEING EXERCISED BY THE KHALQIS IN

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THEIR STRUGGLE "TO SAVE THE GREAT SAUR REVOLUTION" ARE "INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM" AND "BLACK REACTION", WHICH WE ASSUME IS MEANT TO INCLUDE THE BRITISH (BECAUSE OF BBC) AND THE U.S. JUDGING FROM THEIR PRIVATE STATEMENTS AND THEIR SPEECHES, THE KHALOIS REGARD THEMSELVES AS FACED BY A CHALLENGE SIMILAR TO THAT FACED BY THE BOLSHEVIKS IN RUSSIA IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE LATTER'S 1917 REVOLUTION, WHEN SOME FOREIGN POWERS INTERVENED TO ASSIST THE OPPOSITE WHITE FORCES. KHALOI LEADERS TALK IN TERMS OF A STRUGGLE AGAINST "INTERVENTIONISTS," AFTER WHICH "THE REVOLUTION WILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS."

8. (LOU) WHO SUPPORTS THE REGIME? AS IN ALL MARXIST-LENINIST SYSTEMS, THE PARTY IS THE CORE OF STRENGTH. THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA) HAS THUS FAR HELD UP FIRMLY AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT OF ITS ENEMIES. FOR EXAMPLE, FOREIGN OBSERVERS AT HERAT DURING THE MARCH UPPISING NOTED THAT CIVILIAN PARTY CADRE IN SEVERAL INSTANCES PROVIDED EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TO THOSE DISORGANIZED MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES WHICH STILL REMAINED LOYAL TO THE REGIME. THE CURRENT SIZE OF THE PARTY IS NOT EASY TO JUDGE. THE KHALOI CLAIM THAT THEY HAD 50,000 MEMBERS BEFORE THE REVOLUTION, WHICH IS PROBABLY A GROSS EXAGGERATION. ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN DECLINED TO GIVE THE CURRENT FIGURE TO VISITING EMBASSY OFFICERS LAST MONTH, HE LATER IMPLIED TO A FOREIGN NEWSMAN THAT THE FIGURE MIGHT BE AROUND 100,000. WE ALSO THINK THIS FIGURE IS INFLATED. MUCH OF THE PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP CAN BE FOUND AMONG THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS OF AFGHANISTAN, WHO ARE BUSILY INDOCTRINATING THE NATION'S YOUTH (THIS PARTICULAR TYPE OF KHALOI IS ONE OF THE FAVORITE TARGETS OF REBELS WHEN THEY SEIZE A COMMUNITY).

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9. (LOU) ANOTHER KEY ELEMENT OF SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY THE ARMED FORCES, WHICH, IN SPITE OF THE DEFECTIONS OF SOME SMALL UNITS AND INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS, HAVE REMAINED GENERALLY LOYAL TO THE REGIME THUS FAR. THESE FORCES, WHICH MAY NOW TOTAL AS LITTLE AS SOME 80,000 MEN, ARE, HOWEVER, SUBJECT TO CONSTANT ATTRITION THROUGH BATTLE CASUALTIES, CAPTURE BY REBEL FORCES, DEFECTIONS, AND POLITICAL PURGES. FREQUENTLY, THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN THE FIELD WITHOUT ADEQUATE AMMUNITION, FUEL, EQUIPMENT, OR FOOD. RESUPPLY IS BECOMING MORE OF A PROBLEM AS THE REBELS INTERDICT KEY ROADS, GCS, AND PASSES. AERIAL DROPS OF SUPPLIES OCCASIONALLY FALL INTO REBEL HANDS.

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10. LOOKING INTO THE SUMMER: AT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF FIGHTING, ATTRITION IS ALSO SERIOUSLY AFFECTING THE REBEL SIDE. LARGE NUMBERS OF REBELS -- AND INNOCENT PEASANTS -- HAVE BEEN KILLED, WOUNDED, OR CAPTURED. VILLAGES HAVE BEEN BOMBED. IRRIGATION SYSTEMS AND CROPS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. THE REBELS STILL LACK ORGANIZATION AND MEANINGFUL OUTSIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT. WITH ALL ITS PROBLEMS, THE GOVERNMENT SIDE CAN RELY UPON A GENEROUS SOVIET SUPPLY PIPELINE. AS LONG AS THE MAJORITY OF AFGHAN TROOPS AND PILOTS CAN STOMACH THE SLAUGHTER OF THEIR OWN PEOPLE, THE KHALQIS CAN PROBABLY CONTINUE TO RELY UPON THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES. SHOULD THE KHALQIS BE ABLE TO STEM THE TIDE AT ITS CURRENT LIMITS FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS, UNTIL THE NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF THE ARMY CAN BE INCREASED, THE GOVERNMENT COULD CONCEIVABLY BEGIN TO MOVE BACK INTO THOSE MORE REMOTE REGIONS IT CURRENTLY DOES NOT CONTROL. THE REBELS STILL DO NOT LOOK LIKE WINNERS, BUT AS AFGHAN HISTORY HAS SO OFTEN ILLUSTRATED, THINGS CAN CHANGE QUICKLY HERE. AMSTUTZ

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